

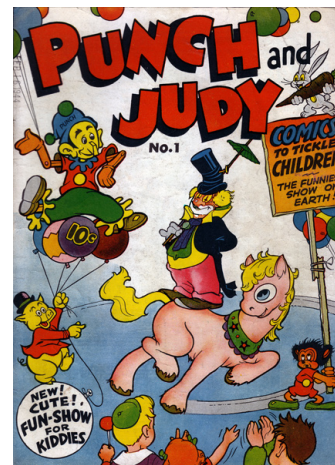
THE HISTORY OF COMICS

Many of us turn to the comic page in the newspaper first because comics make us laugh. We often don't realize, though, that comics have been making people laugh and chuckle for a very long time. Ancient Egyptians created one of the earliest forms of comics. They drew humorous pictures of animals on papyrus (paper made from the papyrus plant). The Romans also created single picture comics, but theirs were more complicated because they introduced sarcasm or other moods in their drawings.

Later, in England during the 17th and 18th centuries, the single picture comic developed further. At that time, local fairs and markets began selling drawings bound together. Thus the first comic book was born, with characters called Punch and Judy. Then during the 18th and 19th centuries, characters were able to "talk" through "balloons." These circles above or near a character's head contained words that the character was saying. Each balloon had a tail of sorts that pointed toward the person saying the words.

The comic strip, as it is known today, began in the 19th century. The comic strip is drawn in sections, or separate boxes, forming a *panel*. Each box is an event in a series of funny events that tell a humorous story. Most often, comic strips run on a daily basis, so that the story they tell continues.

The comic strip went through four phases. The first was during the late 19th century, before comics were *syndicated*, mass-produced and distributed nationwide. Then, around 1914, syndication allowed newspapers everywhere to have a daily comics page. An artist would create a comic strip that would be copied and sent all over the country. At this time,



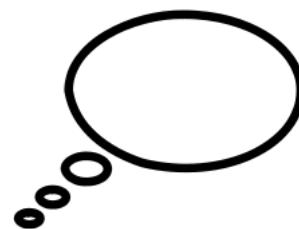
"Punch and Judy" comic books were published from 1944 to 1951. The main characters were Punch, a puppet, and his friend, a real girl named Judy.

The term "comic strip" was coined in the early 20th century in the United States. Prior to that they were referred to as the funnies. Comic strips got their name because of their design. The panels are longer than they are wide, hence the name *strip*.



Speech balloon

Speech balloons (also called speech bubbles, dialogue balloons, or word balloons) are a graphic convention used most commonly in comic books and comic strips to allow words to be understood as representing the speech or thoughts of a given character in the comic. There is often a formal distinction between the balloon that indicates words spoken aloud and the one that indicates thoughts. The bubble that conveys thoughts is often referred to as a thought balloon.



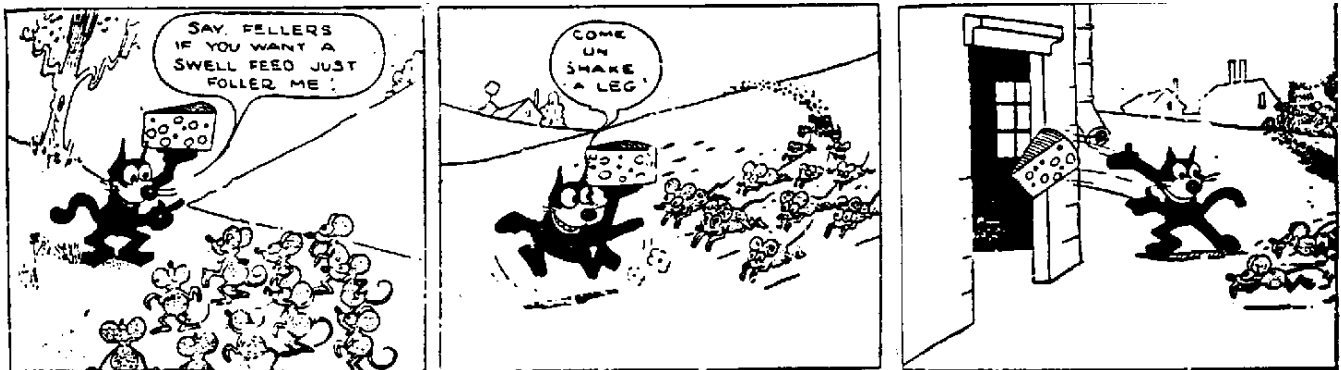
Thought balloon

Reading Mini-Assessment Grade 5
LA.5.1.6.3 and LA 5.1.6.9 Form A

comics were still basically humorous. The third phase of comics, however, introduced action figures and superheroes. These action comics were popular until World War II. In fact, action comics were the most widely published and read comics ever created.

During the fourth and last phase of the development of comics, humor returned in the form of today's funny papers. Even more recently, comics that poke fun at everyday work life have become very popular.

People have always enjoyed a good laugh, especially as a way to begin the day. As long as people like to be amused, entertained, and cheered up by comics that are funny or poke fun at something, there will be comics. Comics seem to be a lighthearted part of human history.



Example of one panel of a comic strip for "Felix the Cat" which entered syndication in the United States in 1923.

Reading Mini-Assessment Grade 5
LA.5.1.6.3 and LA.5.1.6.9 Form A

Name _____ **Date** _____

Directions: Read the passage and choose the correct answer.

1. Read this sentence from the article.

The Romans also created single picture comics, but theirs were more complicated because they introduced sarcasm or other moods in their drawings.

What does the word *complicated* mean?

- A. honest
- B. involved
- C. natural
- D. relaxed

2. Read this sentence from the article.

The Romans also created single picture comics, but theirs were more complicated because they introduced sarcasm or other moods in their drawings.

What does the word *introduced* mean in this sentence?

- A. forced
- B. included
- C. measured
- D. ordered

3. Read this sentence from the article.

At that time, local fairs and markets began selling drawings bound together.

What does the word *bound* mean in this sentence?

- A. changed
- B. controlled
- C. fastened
- D. trimmed

Reading Mini-Assessment Grade 5
LA.5.1.6.3 and LA.5.1.6.9 Form A

4. Read this sentence from the article.

The comic strip went through four phases.

As used in the sentence above, the word *phases* means

- A. events
- B. seasons
- C. stages
- D. subjects

5. Read this sentence from the article.

Many of us turn to the comic page in the newspaper first because comics make us laugh.

Which sentence uses the word *turn* the same as it is used in the sentence above?

- A. You will get your turn to speak in just one minute.
- B. Bruce needs to turn and face the front of the classroom.
- C. The red car will turn left at the corner before the blue car.
- D. Please turn to the month of December in your planning calendar.

6. Read this sentence from the article.

Most often, comic strips run on a daily basis, so that the story they tell continues.

Which sentence uses the word *run* the same as it is used in the sentence above?

- A. Josh will run for class president again this year.
- B. The doctor is going to run some tests on his patient.
- C. We saw a squirrel run across the street and up a tree.
- D. Television stations run stories that are of interest to the public.

<p style="text-align: center;">Reading Mini-Assessment Grade 5 LA.5.1.6.3 and LA.5.1.6.9 Form A</p>

7. Read this sentence from the article.

During the fourth and last phase of the development of comics, humor returned in the form of today's funny papers.

Which meaning of the word *form* is the same one used in the sentence above?

- A. type or variety
- B. a mold or frame
- C. to make or build
- D. document with blank spaces

8. Read this sentence from the article.

Comics seem to be a lighthearted part of human history.

Which meaning of the word *part* is the same one used in the sentence above?

- A. some but not all
- B. piece or segment
- C. to separate or divide
- D. role played by an actor

Reading Mini-Assessment Grade 5
LA.5.1.6.3 and LA.5.1.6.9 Form A

ANSWER KEY

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Item #	Answer	Bench- mark
1.	B	163
2.	B	163
3.	C	163
4.	C	163
5.	D	169
6.	D	169
7.	A	169
8.	B	169

Reading Mini-Assessment Grade 5
LA.5.1.6.3 and LA. 5.1.6.9 Form A

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Reading Mini-Assessment Grade 5
LA.5.1.6.3 and LA. 5.1.6.9 Form A

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